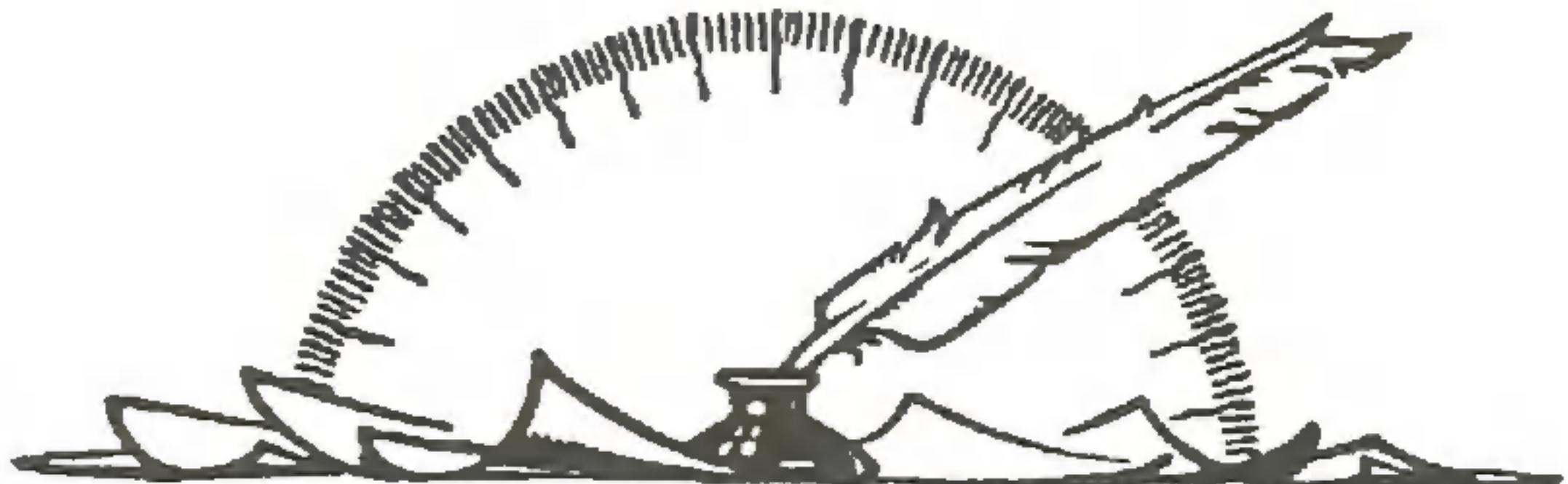


# POINT OF ORIGIN



SPECIAL EDITION

Vol. I No. 3 ♦♦♦

Wednesday, August 7, 1991

♦♦♦ Austin, Texas

## FEATURE STORY

### Our Cup: Is It Half Full? Or Half Empty?

by Dallas Snell  
VP / Executive Producer  
Product Development

Ya know, I'm amazed at how easy it is to lose sight of the good when all you ever hear is the bad. Do you know what I mean? Whether at work or at home, when all you ever hear is what's wrong with everything, you forget that there is ever anything right!

Every single week, year after #%%@\* year, all I ever seem to focus on is our projects missing their schedules! And IF (God forbid!) I forget to worry about it, I've got a multitude of fellow managers that never hesitate to remind me! Week after week after week after week, year after year after year. Late late late late. Ad infinitum. This tends to keep me rather preoccupied in a grumpy kind of way. And my grumpiness can't help but affect other people in a negative manner.

No other single aspect of my job dominates more of my time and energy than tracking our project schedules and determining how to more accurately schedule our projects. Nobody knows better than we do how inexact we are at it. Nobody is more depressed about this than those of us in Product Development (PD) are. Why? Because we have come to accept accurate scheduling as part of our job description. Thus, we view ourselves as rather inept at performing a major function of our job. Depressing, huh?

And on top of our depressing inability to function as per our job description, we take it upon ourselves to grind ourselves to the bone and sweat blood in order to try to get our projects done when we thought we could get them done. Thus we add physical and mental exhaustion to our emotional depression.

So there we are. Tired. Exhausted. Brain dead. Depressed. Those of us who assume project management responsibility feel like failures because we can never do anything right. Those of you who are forced to work extended amounts of overtime feel rather abused. And then some blankety-blank, son-of-a-blank

demands that we work even harder and longer! And when, and if, we ever do finish the @#\$%&\* project we sit there further nurturing our healthy ulcers wondering whether the consumer is going to find our design acceptable! Dear God, there is very little worse than having a product fail in the retail market after we have already abysmally failed at being able to produce the product in a timely and efficient manner. After so much of this, you find yourself sitting there wondering what in the blank is the point of it all? Why am I doing this? This used to be fun. What happened? Where did the fun go to? Where did my energy go? Where did my enthusiasm go? No one really cares how #%%^&\*@ difficult this job is! No one has a \*&%\$#@ clue how impossible all this is!

Have I painted a pretty clear picture of what it may be like for most of us who have been working in Product Development at Origin long enough to have been on at least one major project? Does it sound like we may as well just pass around the razor blades now and get it over with? Are all you new personnel we just hired reading this and wondering if you've just made a big mistake by coming to work for Origin?

SEE!! Isn't it AMAZING how easy it is to lose sight of the GOOD when all you ever hear is the BAD!! Can a single one of you that have been here for at least six months point out two items in less than 30 seconds that you would consider to be POSITIVE, EXCITING and GOOD? Kinda difficult, isn't it?

*(Continued on Page 2)*

*SO, who is this "Dallas" dude anyway? Meet the man behind the plan in Point of Origin's new personality-profile section --- "We The People" --- in Spotlight starting on Page 8.*

## POINT OF ORIGIN #3 TABLE OF CONTENTS

Feature Story .....	Pg. 1	Entertainment .....	Pg. 7
Sales .....	Pg. 5	HELP! (Wanted) .....	Pg. 7
Marketing .....	Pg. 5	HELP! (Granted) .....	Pg. 7
Product Development ...	Pg. 6	Random Bits .....	Pg. 7
Customer Service .....	Pg. 6	Spotlight .....	Pg. 8
International .....	Pg. 6		

Approximately one month ago, I was sitting in a meeting of upper level management discussing the status of projects currently in development. The primary product being discussed was Wing Commander II (WC2). For many reasons that I won't go into now, WC2 was inaccurately scheduled for shipment in June of this year. As early as April, the WC2 team began to feel the pressure, and the beginning sensations of failure and abuse associated with missing our schedule. Because of this schedule, major pressure was applied to the team in early May. During every single week of May and June, we had to continually deal with our awareness, and the awareness of others, that we were failing at getting this project out as scheduled. And we have had to continue to deal with this awareness during the entire month of July. And now it's dragging into August! But as I was saying, I was sitting in this meeting with a large group of people staring at me silently because I had just informed them, again, that WC2 was going to miss yet another schedule. I felt about as good as a worm in an antbed. I was consumed with all the exhausting, depressing feelings of failure I outlined above.

But, as I sat there, something within me shifted focus. A strange, objective awareness of what I was feeling came over me. I became consciously aware of my feelings of failure, AND WHAT WAS CAUSING IT! I asked myself, "Am I, and my entire PD group a failure? Have we EVER done anything GOOD? Have we ever accomplished ANYTHING?"

That started me thinking about what could possibly be viewed as GOOD concerning the efforts of Origin's PD group. After only a few minutes of thinking, my feelings of failure begin to melt away like ice in the summer heat, and left in their stead a feeling of SUCCESS, of ACHIEVEMENT, of extreme PRIDE, for the truly MIRACULOUS achievements of what I KNOW is the DAMNED BEST PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT GROUP EVER ASSEMBLED IN THE HISTORY OF THIS INDUSTRY!

It was literally overwhelming when I began to think about what Origin's PD group has accomplished in recent years! Let me just share a few of those thoughts:

For seven years, from our beginnings in 1983 on through 1989, Origin products were primarily generated by freelancers for initial release on the Apple II. Here is a synopsis of the original titles released:

<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>
2	0	3	3
Ultima III		Ultima IV	Ogre
Caverns of Callisto		Moebius	Ultima I
		Autoduel	Ring Quest
<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>
1	2	6	4
2400 A.D.	Ultima V	Ultima Trilogy	Ultima VI
Times of Lore		Tangled Tales	Bad Blood
		Omega	Wing Commander
		Windwalker	Savage Empire
		Space Rogue	
		Knights of Legend	

The largest games during these seven years were Ultima V and Knights of Legend, each one occupying four Apple II disks for a total of 1.1 megabytes of game.

In January 1987, Four and a half years ago, the Austin office was opened as a satellite development office with me, Rich, and one programmer relocating from New Hampshire. We started with 2000 square feet of office space. Four other programmers operated out of main headquarters in Manchester, New Hampshire, primarily generating conversions. By the summer of that year, we had three freelancers including Chris Roberts, operating at the Austin office.

By January 1988, one year after its startup, Austin PD had increased to 8 employees and 4 freelancers.

In January 1989, the New Hampshire PD group was closed and three of the programmers moved to the Austin office. This brought the Austin group to 28 employees. The three main departments operating at this time were programming, art, and QA.

A major shift occurred in original product development by mid-1989. We abandoned the Apple II development of Ultima VI and shifted to MS-DOS as the original version. Likewise, we shifted focus from the Commodore 64 version of Bad Blood over to the MS-DOS version. This meant that managers, designers, programmers and artists had to start learning what MS-DOS development was all about. That was just 24 months ago.

By January 1990, PD had grown to 41 employees. This included internal staffing to handle sound/music, writing, and technical design.

In 1990, we completed our first major MS-DOS product, ULTIMA VI. It shipped on 7 low density disks and occupied a total of 4 MEGABYTES on a hard drive! We went from 1.1 megabytes on Ultima V Apple to 4 megabytes on Ultima VI MS-DOS! Allowing for the larger memory requirements of VGA graphics versus Apple graphics, the scope of the game was still around 5 TIMES the size of its predecessor! Additionally that year, we shipped Bad Blood, Wing Commander, and Savage Empire. In addition to all these games being 4 to 6 times the size of any game we had ever done before, in addition to this being the first time we had ever done initial development on the MS-DOS platform, in addition to these projects doubling the number of personnel required to manage/coordinate, THESE PROJECTS WERE DONE IN 12 CALENDAR MONTHS, OR LESS, AS COMPARED TO THE 20 TO 30 MONTH TIME FRAME THAT PREVIOUS PROJECTS WERE

**DEVELOPED IN! And one of those products, Wing Commander, SET NEW INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR ACTION/COMBAT SIMULATORS!**

So here we are now. 1991. Product Development employs 75 people. We have almost doubled in the last twelve months. We have 8 managers, 3 directors, 26 programmers, 11 artists, 8 QA, 4 sound/composers, 5 writers, 7 technical design assistants, and 3 other support personnel.

We have built an audio department at Origin that is producing sound, music and speech that is integrated into all our products in a new and dynamic manner that is unparalleled in this industry.

This year, we will have produced another 4 major MS-DOS products. Those products are Martian Dreams, Wing Commander II, Ultima VII, and Strike Commander.

Martian Dreams, the second in our Ultima-Worlds of Adventure series, employed over 15 individuals to create this epic, **6 MEGABYTE FRP in 7 CALENDAR MONTHS!!! TOTALLY UNPRECEDENTED!!**

Wing Commander II is **15 MEGABYTES IN SIZE**. It ships on 8 high density disks. It required a staff of 1 project manager, 1 director, 3 writers, 6 programmers, 4 artists, 1 TDA, and various members of our sound department. The project also included, for the very first time in any product in the history of our industry, an additional 5 megabytes of voice actor digitized speech! **AND THE ENTIRE PROJECT WILL HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN 8 CALENDAR MONTHS!!!**

Ultima VII and Strike Commander are more than 10 megabytes in size! Each project requires over 20 people! Ultima VII is setting new standards in FRPs while Strike Commander is obliterating any and all competition in the flight combat simulator genre using never before seen, **highly innovative, graphic technology**. Both Ultima VII and Strike Commander will have been produced in **LESS THAN 12 CALENDAR MONTHS!**

All of this, while simultaneously developing both the English and Japanese versions of Ultima V Nintendo, Ultima Gameboy, and Ultima VI FMTowns CD (complete with digitized speech). This was the **FIRST TIME** we had **EVER** done any development for the cartridge based Nintendo and Gameboy or the CD based FMTowns!

Additionally, we are currently gearing up to develop both the English and Japanese versions of Ultima VII, Savage Empire, and Martian Dreams for the Super Nintendo, a sequel to Ultima Gameboy, and Wing Commander I, Secret Missions 1, Secret Missions 2, Wing Commander II, Special Operations 1, and Special Operations 2 for the FMTowns CD computer with digitized speech. **ADDITIONALLY**, we are going to be developing the French

and German translations of Wing Commander II, Ultima VII and Strike Commander. These new projects will require approximately 15 new PD personnel. This will put us at approximately 90 employees in PD.

And as if all this wasn't enough, we have decided to increase Origin's Product Development budget from \$2.35 million to \$4.0 million for our next fiscal year (which starts in March 1992). This does not include the \$600 thousand received in development fees from other companies for the cartridge and CD products. The \$4.0 million will allow us to develop 6-7 Origin published titles for the following year, instead of the four per year we have been developing in 1990 and 1991. We haven't yet fully evaluated the increased resource requirements that these new projects will require, but you can rest assured that the increase will put PD at over 100 employees!

The whole industry has taken notice of what we have done at Origin. *Soft-letter 100*, a leading software industry publication, overall ranked Origin the 55th largest U.S. software publisher in terms of product sales for calendar year 1990. We rose from the 75th spot the prior year. This ranked us as **THE 10TH FASTEST-GROWING, INDEPENDENT, U.S.-BASED SOFTWARE COMPANY!!**

**LOOK AT THIS FOLKS! LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED! LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED! LOOK AT THIS UNPRECEDENTED, UNPARALLELED, MIRACULOUS, MULTITUDE OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE FACE OF STAGGERING OBSTACLES!**

**FAILURE????!! SEE HOW ABSOLUTELY LUDICROUS IT IS TO BE BURDENED WITH FEELINGS OF FAILURE IN LIGHT OF WHAT WE, THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT GROUP OF ORIGIN SYSTEMS, HAVE ACCOMPLISHED!!!! NO ONE, ABSOLUTELY NO ONE, IN THIS INDUSTRY HAS DONE WHAT WE HAVE, OR WHAT WE ARE YET STILL CAPABLE OF!!! NOT LUCASFILM, NOT SIERRA, NOT MICROPROSE, NOT ELECTRONIC ARTS, NOT ANYONE!**

\*\*\*

**WE ARE THE BEST**

\*\*\*

*(Continued on Page 4)*

Why? Why have we done it? Why are we the best? What makes us better, more capable, more skilled? It is my opinion that the number one reason is - BECAUSE WE LOVE WHAT WE DO. When I recruit people, my number one consideration is "How much do they love their work?" I don't look for developers that consider this a 9 to 5 job with two 15 minute breaks and an hour lunch. I don't look for people that hate getting up and going to work, and then when they are there they are counting the minutes till lunch or quitting time. I look for people that are entertainment software developers because this is what they dearly love to be doing with their time at this point in their life. I look for people that can't stand the normal, boring, drudgery of regular 9 to 5 jobs. I look for people that are excited about and want to be a part of this growing, changing, dynamic, evolving, electric industry. I look for people whose major motivation is THE NATURE OF THE WORK ITSELF! Individuals with this as their primary motivation are always damned good at what they do!

It is because of Product Development being comprised of individuals such as this, that we will grind ourselves to physical and mental exhaustion in order to do what it is we love to do. But it is very evident that we have grown tired, and weary, and depressed, over the sustained pressure and over the sustained sense of failure that missing our project schedules has caused. Additionally, many employees have begun to feel that Origin management does not care about our employees. That we have an attitude of "use them, abuse them, and discard them."

This just ABSOLUTELY IS NOT TRUE! The reality is that we now have over 100 total employees and their families that Origin is responsible for each and every day. It is costing \$500,000 every month to make payroll and pay our bills. It is a responsibility and obligation that none of us can afford to take lightly. And, in this "Hit-Driven" entertainment business, it all comes back down to having exciting new products to ship and sell.

So, getting back to Product Development, we are going to take several steps to reverse all of our tired, weary, demoralized, depressed feelings of failure and uncaring that currently seems to permeate our PD group. Some of these steps are:

1. Learn how to schedule projects so that 2 to 4 months of rigorous overtime and pressure are not a requirement. This is the best long-term solution, but also the trickiest. All personnel in PD must work together to increase our accuracy in this very inexact science.
2. Evaluate and select some method of remuneration or other compensation that will be perceived as fair and equitable by personnel involved in extensive "crunch mode" work. Details have yet to be worked out, but this might be in the form of project bonuses, some form of overtime pay, or any number of other options.
3. Spend more time and energy focusing on the POSITIVE concerning our projects, company, personnel, etc., while keeping a proper, healthy, RESPONSIBLE, perspective on the negative ramifications of projects missing their schedules.
4. Deal fairly, openly, and firmly, with those individuals that

are unhappy, whether justifiably so or not, and are spreading that unhappiness to others. I have come to have a very healthy respect for the speed with which a negative attitude can now spread through our organization, and the amazingly destructive effects it can have.

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow workers and employees, let me go on the record, officially, to say that the Product Development group at Origin Systems Incorporated, is **THE BEST DAMNED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT GROUP IN THIS INDUSTRY!** We are the best! Each and every one of us. Origin needs all of us. **ORIGIN NEEDS YOU!** That is why you were hired and that's why you're still here. Without you, we do not have the best design, art, code, sound, writing, and testing in the industry! You, the individuals that comprise our company, in Product Development and every single other department, are our single greatest, most valuable asset! We never forget it. Unfortunately, we have been much, much, much too focused on what seems to be *wrong*, rather than on the fact that what we are doing *right* is an order of magnitude bigger than our mistakes.

Please, let it never be said again that we don't care! Let it never be said again that we don't need you! Let it never be said again that we never can get it right! We have done nothing but get it right! I am striking the word "failure" from my vocabulary. If we never do another damned thing right, we will have already done enough to make anyone proud for a lifetime. I know, however, that this group has only just begun to show what it is capable of accomplishing.

The old adage of what do you see when you look at a cup half full of water - do you think of it as half full or half empty - perfectly applies to the last several years of effort by Origin's PD group. For far too long we have been viewing it as half empty. No more. Our cup is not merely half full - **IT HAS BEEN OVERFLOWING FOR A LONG TIME NOW!** I am extremely grateful to each and every one of you for having made this so and damned proud to be a part of it.

- Dallas



## SALES

### **Bulldogs Cleaning Up on Christmas...From Canada to California And Cleveland**

Marten Davies recently returned from Canada where visits were made to all the major players in the Canadian market. Naturally the one question on everyone's lips was "When is Wing II going to release?" To say the interest level is intense is putting it mildly!!

The trip encompassed visits to Multi Micro in Montreal (who have now had Wing Commander on their Top 20 listing for a consecutive 9 months) and in Toronto; Ingram Micro of Canada, Intertan (Radio Shack), and Fidelity a potentially new distributor who has made inroads into record and video store chains in the Canadian market with Nintendo - definitely the channel of the future when CD becomes a reality! The final visit was to Beamscope, Origin's largest Canadian distributor, where Marten growled, barked and hacked his way to a net 83 in Beamscope 1991 Golf Classic which was a fitting way to end the Canadian tour.

As I write we have just received a call from Merisel the large Californian distributor who informed us that Wing Commander has been selected to rollout into an account that they have just gained.

namely Circuit City (specifically 5 stores in the Houston area). This is the electronics retail chain of 170 stores that was reported in the last issue of Point of Origin as one of the potential new accounts that the sales team was trying to bring into the software market. Way to go Bulldogs!

The superstore scene is beginning to heat up. Superstores are by definition approximately 24,000 sq. ft. plus, selling anything associated with computers including the machines themselves. The Bulldogs have been active in trying to gain entry into these channels and I am happy to report that we have achieved success with MicroCenter who informed us that they wish to become a direct account. Although they have only some 6 stores in the group, this type of channel can move significant volumes of product.

Karl spent the last week of July in the Pacific Northwest, making calls on Egghead, Cosco USA and Cosco Canada, and Multiple Zones International. Then he moved on to a four-day college bookstore trade show in Denver to open up new software distribution opportunities through that channel. While there, Karl also

learned that ORIGIN titles are now being carried in Computerland Express, that huge chain's new superstore outlets.

August holds two more mammoth road trips. The first by Karl and Anita will take in the southwest corner of the States covering the headquarters of Price Club West, Merisel, Ingram Micro, Softkat, Warehouse Entertainment and finally Advanced Marketing (a book distributor - where they will be trying to increase the distribution of our Quest for Clues titles and our Fall releases of The Official Wing Commander book and a second general Ultima book.)

The second trip will cover the north-central area including Software Etc, Target Department Stores (500 in the chain), MicroCenter, Pharmor, Handelman, American Software Distributors, Josha Distributors and Sears Stores.

The sales activity continues to heighten and the Bulldogs have vowed to leave NO BONE UNTURNED!! Keep those products coming and we'll keep up the chase!

## MARKETING

### **"Pro Gamers" Rag On Designs, Bestow Awards**

David Ladyman attended the Micropose seminar, "Worst Computer Games", at the recent Origins Gaming Convention in Baltimore (no relationship to our company) and brought back the following notes on comments made at the seminar.

#### **Features that players say they like:**

- \*Being able to slow faster machines down, so that the gamer has a better chance during real-time action. Someone suggested that a "speed dial" could be calibrated by the computer's internal clock.
- \*Modem connection capability that can turn some games into 2-player and multi-player games.
- \* Sequels (but we know that, don't we?)
- \*Replay capability, especially when available from several different viewpoints, including the enemy's viewpoint.
- \*Putting the manual on disk, so that it can be referenced without paging through a book. In particular, it would be nice if the on-disk manual referenced the most recent

action, but could also display other information.

\*Moving diagonally, especially when the path or corridor is diagonal.

#### **Features that players say they hate:**

- \*Games that require an exit to go back to the saved game. Worse yet, games that require a reboot to go back to a saved game.
- \* Requiring copy-protection passwords or information when you go back to a saved game, especially when it happens in the same session.
- \* Artificial Intelligence routines (behavior systems) that blatantly cheat, making it obvious that the game can do things you can't do.
- \*Non-intuitive user interfaces, especially with respect to keystroke combinations. (My suggestion: explain why the key-stroke combinations are what they are, when it is not immediately obvious.)
- \*Games that you can't figure out how to exit (The comment was made that stan-

dardizing keystrokes across a product line is good.)

\*Help books that are necessary to win the game, but that are sold separately.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the Wing Commander team and Martian Dreams team! Wing Commander won the award for the *Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Computer Game* of 1990 at the Origins National Gaming Convention and Exposition. Not to be left behind, Martian Dreams soared to the number three spot for the United States in the July issue of LOGIN. LOGIN's ratings are based on sales figures from Electronic Boutique, Winners Circle, American Software, and H.T. Electronics.

**[NOTE FROM THE EDITOR - I want to wish Jackie Chapman luck and express my thanks for the wonderful work that she did in getting Point of Origin off the ground and onto the printed page. Her contributions will be sorely missed.]**

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

### Racing To Beat The Competition

An update on WCII software completion: right now, it looks like a late-August release is the best we'll achieve, unfortunately. The entire team continues to scramble madly to wrap-up the project and QA has its hands full with loads of cleanup work on bugs they are trying to resolve with the programming staff. The product looks absolutely sensational...it's turned out to be even BIGGER and DEEPER than anyone expected, which is why it's tracking several weeks behind schedule right now. Completion is critical... not only because we have an unprecedented backlog of buyer demand stacking up at retail stores around the world, and a first-day rollout rapidly approaching 50,000 units... but also because we are racing to beat our flight simulator Fall competition to be the first on the shelves! Also expected to release in the next few weeks: "Secrets Of The Luftwaffe" from Lucasfilm, "Falcon 3.0" from Spectrum Holobyte, and "F-117A Stealth Fighter" the F-19 sequel from Microprose. He who gets there first "wins" for the largest and fastest early sell through at retail, a momentum-builder that is hard to replicate. So, if you see any members of the Wing II team crawling bleary-eyed around the offices, give 'em a few words of encouragement and support (and THANKS!) for the effort they are making to get WCII launched onto the charts in the No.1 position.

Sherry Cain has certainly been busy! In continuing her search for artists, she, or someone from PD, has attended or will attend the following conventions to recruit artists for our upcoming products: GenCon, the San Diego Comic Convention, and SIG-Graph.

Security continues to be an important issue for everyone at Origin and particularly in our Product Development areas. It is fact that the Ultima VII CES demo was uploaded onto a number of Canadian BBS systems and some US bulletin boards as well. In fact, Compuserve also obtained a copy and Origin has asked Compuserve not to post the demo. At this time, Origin management is uncertain how the demo was "leaked" or by whom. We are still

investigating the incident and any employee with information is encouraged to speak to Dallas or Fred. Anonymous contributions are also welcome in the Point of Origin drop-boxes. The issue of product security is very serious, as Origin could stand to lose millions of dollars in potential revenues if pre-release software were to leak onto bulletin board systems that engage in software piracy.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

### Martian Dreams "A Dream" On CS Support

The telephones are buzzing upstairs! All of our callers are awaiting WCII with eagerness, and Customer Service is gearing up to provide the level of phone support that the product will require. Martian Dreams has been very well accepted by our customers, who are claiming that the game is one of the cleanest and least support-requiring releases for the PC yet produced at Origin. In this light, CS wishes to extend their thanks to the folks in Development on Martian Dreams who made their job easier. One recurring "sticky" point for customers seems to involve talking to the Martian named Tekapesh. Many people have to get a little help to know to say "better" to Tekapesh a second time.

Marie Lockhart, our receptionist, was recently married to Jack Williams, a local tennis pro and musician. They spent a week-long honeymoon in New Mexico. CONGRATULATIONS!! (sorry guys!)

Two new CSRs have started in recent weeks. They are Chuck Zoch and Alan Davis. Welcome aboard, guys!

Donna Whitaker has moved the Product Returns & Exchanges Department to Origin West, working there on a half-day basis. She's back in the main building in the afternoon and can be reached at her regular extension during the afternoon.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Rob Makes Another Sushi Run; Brings Back The Beef

Robert Garriott was again in Japan week before last. He has been finalizing contract discussions with Pony Canyon and Fujisankei regarding the next four-product deal we will be doing together:

Ultima 7, Savage Empire and Martian Dreams all for the Super NES; and an Ultima Gameboy sequel. ORIGIN will do the software development on all of those projects. This appears to be a "done deal" so additional hiring and office expansion will be commencing soon. He is also investigating interest from several Japanese film companies about the potential for a joint-venture deal to create a fully computer-generated animation movie for the silver screen based on an ORIGIN property; further details are not yet available. Rob is also shopping for better disk prices direct from Japanese manufacturers to help us bring down the cost-of-goods for all those disks our products now require.

## Europe Awaits The Second Coming Of The Commander

*(The following is a reprint of a letter received from Mindscape - U.K.):*

Dear Gentlemen,

Thank you for sending us Wing Commander II beta version.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dallas, Chris and the rest of the team on another superb creation - on behalf of everybody here at Mindscape, please pass on my congratulations to everyone involved (which I guess is going to be pretty much the whole company!)

STOP PRESS: The Wing Commander II expanded demo came in and went straight out as the star performer on the Origin Roadshow - a three day trek around the country visiting all of our key account distributors and some key retail outlets. We took a suitably equipped PC installed with WCII and the other current Origin titles - everyone who has seen it in action is totally amazed and very impressed by what they have seen. This looks like good news for the sales figure...as I'm sure Marten will be delighted to hear!

So once again, well done to all involved. I think this is going to be a wonderful summer!

With all best wishes,

Phil Harrison  
Product Development Manager  
Mindscape International (U.K.)

## ENTERTAINMENT

### **Cookin' Up Lunch, Picnics, and Parties!**

Wednesday lunch cookouts have started again! Food is served from 12:00 pm until 1:30 -2:00 pm, and the cost at the time of this issue is \$3.00 which provides hamburgers or hot-dogs with fixings, drinks, chips, and desert. The Entertainment Committee is also looking for volunteers to assist with set-up, cooking and clean-up. Please contact Kay Gilmore if interested.

Anyone wishing to submit ideas, make suggestions, or volunteer to help with entertainment projects should speak to a committee member: Kay, Beth, Curtis, Michelle C., Donna, or Carol. Or drop a line on E-Mail using the "Entertainment" mail group.

A general "THANKS!!!" to Richard for throwing yet another terrific 4th of July party out at his place in honor of the birth of our nation (and, of course, the birth of himself, too!). A great time was had by all attendees as they strolled the grounds in Greek-and-Roman-era mythological garb... sipping fine spirits... dining on roasted swine and exotic cheeses... listening to philosophers babble... partaking in archery and crossbow competition, tug-of-wars, and refreshing dips in the spa... and watching a couple of unique plays on a custom-built stage. You ain't seen nothin' until you absorb the fashionable ensembles of authentic period clothing donned by Mark Chandler in his bath-towel-over-shorts-and-Tshirt, or Craig Miller who rolled himself in his multi-colored print bedsheet for the occasion... Paris and Milan beware! Of course, to top off the evening, there was the usual resplendent display of fireworks high over the hilltops (and, occasionally, INTO the gathered audience)! Again, THANKS, Rich... nobody throws a better party than you, pal!

The next company picnic will be held on August 25th at Westlake Beach. The same ground rules as before will apply, and the Entertainment Committee is asking all who attend to bring some sort of "covered dish" style food to share. Origin will be providing meat & drinks as before, as well as cover the cost of admission.

## HELP! (WANTED)

### **Job Openings...**

**Public Relations Manager** (Newly created position budgeted to begin in August). Will plan and implement a national and international public relations plan to increase visibility of ORIGIN through major publications and broadcast media. 3-5 years experience reporting or on the editorial staff of a newspaper or magazine helpful. For further information contact Pat Price Monroe.

Customer Service is seeking one more **Customer Service Representative**. Interested persons should contact Kay Gilmore.

## HELP! (GRANTED)

### **New Assignments...**

Wayne Baker has moved from Customer Service to assume the position of Marketing Coordinator. He will be working closely with Pat Price Monroe in maintaining and building Origin's market awareness. Congratulations, Wayne!

Eric Brown and Kirk Winterrowd have been recently assigned to Technical Design Assistant posts in Product Development. Eric is currently assigned to the Ultima 7 Project, and Kirk is working on Strike Commander. Welcome downstairs, guys!

Zoe Smith is taking over for Donna Schmidt on personnel recruiting for the next month or two (position continues as a temporary post). Welcome Zoe!

## RANDOM BITS

### **Answers Later**

We have received quite a few notes in the Point of Origin drop-box. Because of the large volume of information in this issue, your questions will be answered over the next several issues of Point of Origin. Keep the notes coming!

### **Garb Check**

Lord British's UNOFFICIAL Official MANDITORY dress code:

Mondays:	Employee choice
Tuesdays:	Dress-up (ties etc.)
Wednesdays:	Beach / Cookout attire
Thursdays:	Bathrobe / Sleepware
Fridays:	Origin Day (Origin shirts, Game shirts, Jackets)

### **Computer Gaming World's Top Ten Rated Computer Games**

The following is a reprint from the September 1991 issue of Computer Gaming World:

1	<b>Wing Commander</b>	<b>Origin</b>
2	<b>Railroad Tycoon</b>	<b>MicroProse</b>
3	<b>Red Baron</b>	<b>Dynamix</b>
4	<b>Their Finest Hour</b>	<b>LucasFilm</b>
5	<b>Warlords</b>	<b>SSG</b>
6	<b>Space Quest IV</b>	<b>Sierra</b>
7	<b>SimCity</b>	<b>Maxis</b>
8	<b>Harpoon</b>	<b>Three-Sixty</b>
9	<b>Ultima VI</b>	<b>Origin</b>
10	<b>M-1 Tank Platoon</b>	<b>MicroProse</b>

Ultima VI stays aloft in its position as the #1 rated Role-Playing game, and Wing Commander continues to soar as the #1 rated Action game.

## **Point of ORIGIN**

**Editing & Layout: Steve Cantrell**

**Thanks To: Michelle Cadell & David Ladymann**

**Contributions: ORIGIN Staff**